

Amendments to the Claims:

1-13 (canceled)

14. (New) The method of generating an enhanced echocardiographic image of a human or non-human body comprising: administering into the pulmonary system of said body an echocardiographic contrast enhancing amount of a contrast agent comprising gasmicrobubble-generating aggregates of microparticles; applying to a part of said body ultrasound at a frequency of 0.1 to 15 MHZ; and generating said image; said microparticles comprising a water soluble matrix material and a surfactant, the microbubbles generated by said aggregates comprising SF₆ or a fluorinated low molecular weight hydrocarbon, said aggregates being 20-125 μ m in size and said microparticles having an average size of 0.1 to 50 μ m.

15. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 in which the surfactant is selected from the group consisting of straight chain aliphatic carboxylic acids and salts, sorbitan esters and mono- and di-glycerides thereof; aralkanoic acids and the salts thereof; steroid acids; sterols; straight chain aliphatic alcohols; phospholipids; alkali metal alkyl sulphates and sulphonated esters; polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene copolymers; polyoxyethylated sorbitan esters; and mixtures of any of the foregoing.

16. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 in which the surfactant comprises a lipophilically modified carbohydrate.

17. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 in which the surfactant is present in an amount of 0.1-2.0% w/w relative to the water soluble matrix.

18. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 for which the microbubbles generated by said aggregates contain air in admixture with said SF₆ or fluorinated hydrocarbon.

19. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 for which the microbubbles generated by said aggregates comprise carbon tetrafluoride.

20. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 in which the water soluble matrix is a carbohydrate.
21. (New) The method as claimed in claim 20 in which the carbohydrate is a polysaccharide.
22. (New) The method as claimed in claim 20 in which the carbohydrate is a sugar alcohol.
23. (New) The method as claimed in claim 14 which is non-contrast giving before use, but which becomes effective on administration.
24. (New) The method as claimed in claim 15 which is non-contrast giving before use, but which becomes effective on administration.
25. (New) The method as claimed in claim 16 which is non-contrast giving before use, but which becomes effective on administration.
26. (New) The method as claimed in claim 17 which is non-contrast giving before use, but which becomes effective on administration.
27. (New) The method as claimed in claim 18 which is non-contrast giving before use, but which becomes effective on administration.
28. (New) The method as claimed in claim 19 which is non-contrast giving before use, but which becomes effective on administration.